



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

of the dearth about Gilgal may have induced this husbandman to aid Elisha and these sons of the prophets, but the aid is received as a matter of course, and justifies the supposition that this was not out of the usual order of events. A still clearer case is found where Gehazi (2 Kgs. 5:21-24) follows the chariot of Naaman, saying, "My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets; give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment" (v. 22). The bare fact that such a request should be made, shows that it was in accordance with the custom of the times to aid and help support these sons of the prophets. They were evidently largely dependent upon the charity of Israel and the people of God.

In conclusion, we have found in this brief discussion that the sons of the prophets 1) were collected together in bands or schools; 2) in six different localities, viz., (a) Ramah, (b) Bethel, (c) Gilgal, (d) Jericho, (e) Carmel, (f) Samaria; 3) under the tuition of (a) Samuel, (b) Elijah and (c) Elisha; 4) with instruction in (a) prophesying-worship, (b) sacred music, (c) practical matters of their day; 5) with their time wholly occupied in (a) study and worship, (b) doing errands for their masters and God, (c) performing the regular duties of a prophet; 6) largely dependent for their support upon the charity of the people.

All of these facts and inferences throw a new halo about the prophet of the Old Testament.

THE BABYLONIAN IŠTAR-EPIC.

BY JAMES A. CRAIG, PH. D.,

Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, O.

Among the Assyrian kings, Aššurbanipal is conspicuous both as a ruthless warrior and as a man of letters and scientific aspirations. It is to him and to his famous library, which was destroyed in the downfall of Nineveh, through the Chaldeans, that we are indebted for the preservation of this poem as well as for a large part of the literature that has come down to us. He was the great patron of science and art. He not only employed scribes to record his own fortunes and achievements in war, but also, either out of a purely literary instinct or from a consciousness of the solidarity of the human family, felt impelled to preserve for his own and future times the intellectual products of the past. For this purpose he gathered about his court competent scholars to translate the heritage of literary works bequeathed to the Babylonian and Assyrian Semites, from a people whose ancestry, language and traditions were distinct from his own, viz., the early Akkadian inhabitants of Babylonia. Touching the lineage of this people archaeology has not much information. Their language was highly agglutinative. Several of its syllabic characters bear a suggestive similarity, both in form and meaning, to the early Chinese characters, the difference being between horizontal and perpendicular lines. In the compounding of ideographs there is a further similarity. Their physiological features and habits of life, so far as we know them, would also favor comparison. The Akkadians are called in the texts sal-

mat kaḫḫadi, i. e., blackheaded. Their affinities in speech, etc., so far as we know them, from the monuments are, at least, Ural-altaic, and it may be that further discoveries and investigations such as have been begun by Prof. T. LaCouverie, of London, may reveal unsuspected kinships.

In religion they were polytheists, and this polytheism probably resulted from a primitive Shamanism, such as exists at present among the Ostiaks and other tribes of Siberia.

Theirs was an individualized pantheism; the lower world and the heavens were full of spirits good and bad. Demoniacal possession was a prominent article of their belief. These embodied themselves in man, in reptiles, in the winds, etc., and all were subject to their attack. Over these demons the priests had the power of exorcism by means of certain magical incantation-ceremonies. Gradually these spirits became deified, and those of the sky, earth and under-world attained to prominence—the others ranked as *dii minores*. Later, as with the Assyrians so with the Chaldeans, the gods were conceived of anthropomorphically, and with the exception of Nineb and Nergal represented in human form.

In our epic we have mention of several gods. Samaš is the sun-god, who, owing to the peculiarity of the warm southern climate, and the astronomical or astrological tendencies of the people, held a rank inferior to Sin, the moon-god, who was, according to their mythology, his father. Ea, who creates the messenger, Uddušu-nâmir, was the god of life and knowledge, the determiner of destiny, king of the abyss and rivers, plays a large role in the account of the deluge, informs the Babylonian Noah, Hassisadra-Xisuthros, of the conclusion of the gods and commands him to build a ship,—he also becomes the father of Bel, the tutelary divinity of Babylon. Allâtu, who bore the name of Irkalla also, was the goddess of the lower world and the spouse of Nergal, who in one of the hymns is styled “the majestic croucher” (the great lion) among the gods. Namtar, originally conceived of as a destroying plague, is personified; he was regarded as the son of Allâtu, and as her faithful servant to whom was entrusted the conduct of those condemned to punishment to the great prison-house. On the earth his mission was to inflict with disease, and thus acquire new subjects for his mistress in the lower world. His deadly mission was performed in the night, for so long as the sun-god had sway in the heavens this power of darkness was more or less circumscribed. In Iṣtar and Tammuz we find the archetypes of western cults.

Tammuz was the sun-god of Eridu, the young and beautiful spouse of Iṣtar, who was bereft of him through the antagonistic and slaying might of winter. He is the Adonis of Greek mythology, which represented him as the son of the priest of the Paphian Aphrodite, Cinyras, by his own daughter, Myrrha. His worship passed over to the Greeks through the Phœnicians, who commemorated his death at Byblos on the north of Beyrût, on the highway between Babylonia and the west. Here, as the blood-colored waters rolled down from the Lebanon range through the Nahr Ibrahim seaward, the inhabitants of Byblos (Geba) gathered to celebrate the funeral festival of the god. Streets and temples were filled with wailing women who tore their hair, disfigured their faces and cut their breasts in token of their grief. With the eunuch priests of Astoreth their cry ascended to heaven. This festival was a part of Ezekiel’s vision recorded in chap. VIII. Iṣtar, the Astoreth of the Phœnicians, the Aphrodite of the Cyprians, the Artemis of Ephesus, was of Akkadian origin, as shown both by the name and by the

confusion among the Semites in regard to her. She stands on an equality with the other deities of the pantheon, females among the Akkadians being accorded the preference. In later times she was worshiped both at Nineveh and at Arbela, but in the previously established centre, Aššur, no temple was erected to her honor. Among the earlier Assyrian kings she was rarely invoked and always as a subordinate; but in the time of Esarhaddon she was elevated to a position of supreme power. She is the mighty one who has founded his throne for numberless days and endless years, and to him, her faithful son, she promised power to overcome and vanquish all his enemies. Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus), his son and successor, who worshiped her in Arbela, and whose creation, together with that of Aššur, he acknowledged himself to be, invoked her aid as the "queen of war." When Teumman, the Elamitic king, who was said by the Assyrian scribe to be "like a devil," devised evil against his kingdom and hers, her aid was invoked and granted. "Fear not!" was the returning word, "for I have compassion upon thee for the lifting up of thy hands, for thine eyes which are full of tears." She manifests herself to the seer, in a night-vision, in human form and angry mien, armed with bow and broadsword for war. She speaks as a mother to the fearful king, and promises victory: "his face should not pale, his feet should not stumble, nor his strength wax feeble." It was particularly among the Assyrians, who were themselves a warlike people, that she was honored for her warlike tendencies; the same feature was emphasized in the Ephesian goddess. The Babylonians, on the other hand, dwelt upon her finer instincts, as did also the Phœnicians with the Cyprian goddess. It is this gentler side of her nature, the love side, which in course of time became degraded and debauched, that is seen in our epic. She mourns the loss of her youthful Tammuz, and descends into the lowest depths to search for the waters of life by which she may restore him from the power of death. Originally she must have been the deified spirit of the earth, who was wedded to the sun-god. He was killed by the might of winter and she was left to mourn in widowhood. The Phœnician and Grecian cults of Ashtoreth and Aphrodite (Venus) are, therefore, to be found in their germs in Akkadian mythology. Ištār did not remain simply the great life-producer, but in time became the goddess of love and reproduction. Fecundity and procreative power and sensual instinct were her gifts, hence her withdrawal, in the poem, from the upper world is attended by the completest disruption of social life, not through a perversion of natural instinct, but by its complete cessation.

This poem has, following Geo. Smith, been regarded by almost all Assyriologists, as an Episode of the Nimrod-Epos, and this view has hindered the proper understanding of the closing lines, as in other instances wrong translations have led to fanciful theories. Fox Talbot, who translated it in part twenty-five years ago, and who ten years later gave a translation of it to be found in Vol. I. of the "Records of the Past," was led by a groundless translation of Reverse, 17-18, to offer the conjecture that it was a kind of miracle-play actually performed in one of the temples, adding: "Juggling tricks which have been known in the East from immemorial (*vide* Pharaoh's magicians) were probably introduced for the amusement of the audience." As a mark of the advance in the study of Assyriology it may be interesting to quote the translation. It is: "The chiefest deceitful trick! Bring forth fishes of the waters out of an empty vessel." The lines were, indeed, difficult. The present understanding of the text is due not to any *single* Assyriologist, but to Assyriologists. Although the names of Tal-

bot, Schrader, Smith are most intimately connected with it, yet they left much to be desired, as was to be expected. In 1887, my fellow-student and friend, Dr. Jeremias, gave a new translation and commentary much in advance of anything else on the subject. In his introduction he denies that there is anything in the poem which would lead one to suppose that the descent of Ištar was in any way connected with a desire to avenge herself of the insult offered her by Nimrod and Eabani. Rather is it a rhapsody indirectly related to the stories of the love-adventures of Ištar, inasmuch as the mythological relation of Ištar to Tammuz forms the back-ground of the narrative. Moreover, in the Nimrod-Epic, Ištar appears as the daughter of the god Anu, while here she is the daughter of Sin. The closing lines throw light on the whole. They do not belong to the epic proper; nevertheless, they form the core of the whole, since they furnish the reason for the narration of the "Descent of Ištar." A man is mourning the death of his sister, and betakes himself to a magician to ascertain how he can redeem her from the prison-house of Hades. To prove to him that the gates of Hades were not impassable, he tells him the story of Ištar, and advises him to secure, by offerings and prayer, the help of Ištar, the conqueror of Hades, and Tammuz. After this he is to perform certain funeral-rites over the sarcophagus of the dead, and assisted by the companions of Ištar (the *uhâti*), begin the wail. In the fifth line from the last the departed spirit hears the brother's lament and beseeches him to perform these ceremonies on the days of Tammuz (cf. Ezek. 8:14) and there effect her deliverance from the lower-world.

It is interesting also to note the correspondences between this Hades of the Akkadians and that of the Old Testament. Doors and bars are covered with "dust," and the imprisoned spirits feed upon clay. It is a place of darkness, a prison whence there is no escape, a place where there is no hope or help, a veritable *bêth 'ôlâm* (*êkal kêtû*) hid in the lower depths. So the hope of Job "goes down to the bars of Šheôl, when once there is rest in the dust," and Hezekiah said: "In the noontide of my days, I shall go into the gates of Šheôl. In Ps. 88:4 sq., the suppliant mourns: "I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath *no help* cast off among the dead." . . . "Thou hast laid me in the *lowest pit*, in *dark places*, in the depths." To these *lowest* depths of Šheôl, Isaiah and Ezekiel assign the king of Babylon and the Assyrian host. In Job 10:21,22 Job prays for a little comfort before he goes hence whence he "should *not return*," even "to the *land of darkness and shadow of death*," a land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness. The concreteness with which everything is described contrasts, on the other hand, with the Hades of the Old Testament.

The porter at the gates and the waters will at once recall the Grecian mythology with its Charon, Acheron, Cocytus and Periphegethon.

I may say in offering the following translation that, in reproducing in modern language the epics or lyrics of the past, it is not only justifiable but even necessary, if we wish them to appeal to us as they did to those for whom they were composed, to present them in some of the forms of our own poetical products. This is the finest epic of ancient Chaldea. Its poetry is seen even in the particulars of the construction. The chief peculiarity of Semitic poetry (the *parallel membrorum*) runs throughout. Brevity is used to make the scenic and the tragic more vivid and impressive. The imagination of the reader is forced into activity

—transitions are rapid even to abruptness. Asyndeton prevails everywhere. Moreover, there seems to have been an intentional effort at metrical composition as in the lines 20–24 which I shall give here in the Assyrian :

usêlâ mitûti âkilê baltûti
 êli baltûti imâidu mîtûti
 kêpu pâšu êpušma ikabbi
 izzakara ana rabîti Ištar

Again, in the conduct of Ištar through the seven gates by the porter, there is a consistent repetition of the words of the first line in the second, and the third rhymes with both, where there is no necessity of repetition if the effect which it produces were not desired. The true character of the poem can be preserved by throwing it into metrical form and a literal rendering can be given by using liberty in changing the metre or introducing broken lines. It is with the desire of preserving more fully the poetic virtues of an epic, which at times reminds one of a Homer or Aeschylus, that I offer the following, with the view rather of intimating how it might be done than of doing it—*poeta nascitur, non fit*.

A BABYLONIAN EPIC.—IŠTAR'S DESCENT TO HADES.

On the land without regress, the land that thou knowest,
 Ištar, Sin's daughter, did fix her attention,
 The daughter of Sin did fix her attention,
 On the dwelling of darkness, the abode of Irkalla,
 On the dwelling whose inhabitant comes no more out,
 On the road whose advancing knows no returning,
 On the house whose inhabitant's remov'd from the light,
 Where they're nourished with dust and clay is their food,
 Where they see not the light, but in darkness are dwelling,
 And are clad like the birds with a covering of wings;
 On door and on bars lies the dust thickly gathered.

Arrived at the door of the land without regress,
 To the porter in keeping, this order she giveth :
 Thou watcher of waters, throw open thy portal !
 Throw open thy portal, within will I enter !
 If the door be not opened that I may pass through it,
 The door will I shatter, its bolts break in pieces,
 Its sills will I burst, its leaves tear asunder,
 The dead will I raise up, will food and life give them,
 Even unto the living the dead will I raise up.

The porter then opened his mouth and made answer,
 To the great goddess Ištar, made answer the porter :
 "Withhold ! O my lady, do not break it away,
 I go to Allâtû, thy name to announce."

The porter announced to the queen, to Allâtu :
 "Thy sister, Ištar, is come over these waters
"

When Allâtu these tidings received she made answer :
 "What bringeth her heart to me, pray ? What trouble ?
 These waters I have
 Like the rush and the roar of the flood am I weeping,
 Am weeping o'er men who their wives have abandoned,
 O'er maidens who mourn the embrace of their lovers,
 Am weeping o'er infants destroyed e'er their day.
 Go ! porter, throw open thy door—open to her !
 And treat her according to olden-time law."

The porter departed, threw open his door ;
 "O enter, my lady, exult underworld !
 Palace of the land, that knows no returning,
 O let it rejoice in thy presence."

The first door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 Removed the great crown from her head.
 "Why tak'st thou the great crown from *my* head, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The next door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 And the rings were removed from her ears.
 "Why tak'st thou the rings from my ears, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The third door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 The necklace removed from her neck.
 "Why tak'st thou from my neck the necklace, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The fourth door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 Her jewels removed from her breast.
 "Why tak'st thou from my breast the jewels, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The fifth door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 The gemmed-girdle removed from her waist.
 "Why tak'st thou from my waist my gemmed-girdle, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The sixth door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 Took the rings from her hands and her feet.
 "Why from hands and from feet take the rings, pray, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."
 The seventh door he caused her to enter, disrobed her,
 From her body her cincture removed.
 "Why take from my body my cincture, O porter ?"
 "O enter, my lady, for so bids Allâtu."

To the land without regress when Ištar descended,
 Allātu beheld her and raged in her presence ;
 Imprudently, boldly, did Ištar attack her.
 Then opened Allātu her mouth and commanded,
 To Namtar, her servant, the order was given :
 " Go, Namtar, and open my (case of enchantments)!
 Go bring (them hither).
 * { With disease of the eye and the hip and the foot,
 { With disease of the heart and the scalp, go smite Ištār !
 Afflict her whole person !"

After Ištar, the goddess, had (been thus afflicted)
 The bull no more covered the cow, nor ass gendered ;
 No more in the street lay the man with the maiden ;
 The man went asleep when he would,
 When she would, slept the maiden.

The god's-servant, Pap-sû-kal, tore his face in the presence
 Of Šamaš—while clothed in the garb of deep mourning—
 Šamaš went, sorely wept before Sin, his father,
 His tears ran down before the king, Ea,
 Saying : " Ištar's gone down to the land, and returns not.
 Since Ištar's descent to the land without regress
 The bull no more covers the cow, nor ass genders ;
 No more in the street lies the man with the maiden.
 The man falls asleep when he will,
 When she will, sleeps the maiden."

Then Ea created a male in his wisdom,
 The god's-servant, Uddušu-nâmir, created.
 " Go ! Uddušu-nâmir, to the land without regress,
 The seven doors of the land without regress open !
 Let Allātu behold thee, and rejoice in thy presence !
 When her heart is at ease, and her spirit is joyful ;
 Then do thou adjure her in the name of the great gods :
 ' Thy head raise, to the fountain direct thy attention,
 O lady, confine not the fountain, I pray thee ;
 I desire to drink of the waters within it. ' "

This hearing, Allātu her sides smote, her nails bit.
 " Of me thou hast asked an impossible favor.
 Hence ! Uddušu-nâmir, in the dungeon I'll shut thee ;
 Thy food shall be the mud of the city,
 From the drains of the city shalt thou drink the water,
 The shadow of the wall shall be thy dwelling,
 Thy dwelling-place shall be its foundation.
 Confinement and dungeon, thy strength let them shatter."

* In the original there are five lines here.

Allātu then opened her mouth and commanded,
 To Namtar, her servant, the order was given :
 "Go! Namtar, break down the palace eternal!
 Go! shatter the pillars, foundation-stones scatter,
 Go! lead forth the spirits, on golden thrones set them,
 With the water of life sprinkle Ištar, the goddess,
 Lead her forth from my presence—"

Then went Namtar and broke down the palace eternal,
 And shattered the pillars, the foundation-stones scattered ;
 He led forth the spirits, on golden thrones sat them,
 With the water-of-life sprinkled Ištar the goddess.
 Led her forth from her presence.
 Through the *first* door he led her, gave to her her cincture.
 Through the *second* door he led her, and gave her rings to her.
 Through the *third* door he led her, gave back her gemmed-girdle.
 Through the *fourth* door he led her, gave back her breast-jewels.
 Through the *fifth* door he led her, gave to her her necklace.
 Through the *sixth* door he led her, gave to her her ear-rings.
 Through the *seventh* door he led her, and the great crown gave to her.

Here ends the descent of Ištar. The priest continues :—

"If her freedom she grant thee not, turn to *her*, facing,
 And for Tammuz, the bridegroom of the years of her youth,
 Pour out water e'en purest, with sweet balm [anoint him]
 And clothe him with garments, a flute [give unto him]
 The companions of Ištar, let wail with loud [wailing],
 And the goddess, Belili, the precious case breaking, . . .
 With diamonds(?) (the place) shall be filled (to o'erflowing)."
 The complaint of her brother she then understanding,
 The great goddess Belili the precious case breaking . . .
 (The whole place) with diamonds(?) was filled to o'erflowing. .
 "O let me not perish, nay, do not, my brother!
 On the feast-days of Tammuz play the crystal flute for me,
 At that time, O play me the flute.
 Let the mourners then play for me, both men and maidens,
 Let them play upon instruments, let them breathe incense."